

Amiel Studley



THE DOCTOR

MEDICAL

NEWS-PAPER:

OR,



AND

THE PHYSICIAN.

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The Lord hath created Medicines out of the Earth:—With such doth he heal Men, and taketh away their PAINS.—ECCLES. XXXVIII. 4, 7.

VOL. I.

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FROM THE MEDICAL AND AGRICULTURAL REG.

LONG LIFE.

WHEN the various functions of the body, voluntary and involuntary motions, are performed with ease, and suffer no interruption, the body is said to be in health; in a contrary case it is diseased. Considering the many dangers to which man is exposed, it is surprising he should remain in health so long; and our astonishment increases when we reflect how often he escapes the dangers prepared by his own hand. But parental nature frequently repairs the injury in a manner unknown to us. To set down supinely with a notion, that if the Majesty of Heaven wills us to die, we certainly shall, in the use of means to prolong life; and if He wills the contrary, we shall live, in the neglect of those means, is a conduct unscriptural and absurd. Disease may be considered the consequence of the moral or rather immoral conduct of man, in deviating from a line prescribed by his Maker.

The powers of life may be compared to the oil in a lamp: in time they will be exhausted; they may be supported or diminished; when exhausted death invariably closes the drama. Death from mere old age may be compared to the extinction of the light when the oil is all consumed; and death from disease, to the blowing out of the light, when the oil is not all consumed, and might have burned longer. There are laws in nature, by which man may arrive to maturity, to the summit of health and vigor; and

there are laws, by which his powers of life are lessened and finally exhausted. There are the "bounds which he cannot pass."

In order to extend the common term of life, mankind must be persuaded to return to that primeval state of nature, from which, history furnishes us almost incredible instances of longevity. The antediluvians enjoyed an uninterrupted state of health;—their manner of living and vegetable diet was simple and not injurious. They had little need to attend to their health, as the seeds of disease were little scattered in such a state. We have deserted from the simple mode of life, which prevailed in the primitive ages. We have acquired our improved state of mental culture, by sacrificing to it much of our bodily welfare. We are less accustomed to consult what nature requires, with respect to diet, mode of life, clothing, &c. than to follow fashions, customs and our own disordered inclinations.

The desire of long life is inherent in all human nature: and the possibility of prolonging it was never doubted by the orientals. The circumstances which favour the attainment of long life, are—

1. Descent from long lived ancestors, or a certain bodily and mental disposition to longevity.

2. A gradual growth of the faculties, both of body and mind.—Too early an exertion of the powers either of body or mind, is destructive. The paths of nature should be followed, and every thing which hastens the evolutions of the natural powers, and every

exertion of strength disproportionate to the ability of the individual, should be avoided as of dangerous tendency. The age of man bears a certain proportion to the growth of his various powers. The design of nature is that man shall live longer than most of the lower animals; he of course requires a longer space of time to develop the faculties both of body and mind. Nature resents every outrage committed on her treasures, and seldom fails to punish the transgressor with lingering disease or early dissolution.

3. Injuring ourselves to the habits of supporting & resisting the various impressions of external agency.—Man is capable of undergoing the vicissitudes of air, weather, and climate, and can digest any article of food, if his stomach has not been wantonly indulged, without minute attention to time and regularity, if his duty or employment render it necessary; but he who has been brought up tenderly (as it were in a hot-house) or he who has been previously accustomed to a hardy mode of life, and is seized with a whim of bestowing too much attention to his health, will suffer from small causes, and take cold at every change of the air, &c.

4. Moderate exercise both of body & mind.—This adds to the powers of life, and is greatly conducive to the object in question. Equanimity, or that state of mind which is not disquieted by its own exertions, in mental research or other objects, is conducive to long life. Fatigue of mind is ruinous to the body. Profound speculation, where the

mind is continually absorbed in abstruse inquiry, exhausts the powers of life, and brings premature old age.

5. A steady and equal progress through life.—He whom neither joy convulses, nor melancholy corrodes, whose drama of life is not chequered by too sudden vicissitudes, may expect with some probability, a long enjoyment of that life to which he has become habituated. Grief destroys digestion, and relaxes the system. Fear weakens and disposes to disease. Anger inflames, and sometimes produces immediate death. All the passions, when carried to excess, bring on formidable diseases.

6. Temperance in eating and drinking.—There is scarcely an instance of any person who has attained uncommon longevity, who has not been regular in his diet and manner of living. Every one should study his own constitution, and regulate his mode of life accordingly; he should make his own experience his guide in what he finds most suitable and convenient. A sound state of digestion greatly favors the attainment of advanced age; and there is not a surer symptom of approaching dissolution in aged persons, than complaints of indigestion.—Those who wish to preserve a sound state of digestion will observe temperance. We are liable to commit great errors both in quantity and quality of food, but especially the former; and every satiety is an outrage on the powers of digestion, which is of the utmost consequence to the welfare of the individual. He who eats slowly and moderately at several dishes of food, will less injure his stomach, than one who eats immoderately of one or two favorite articles. We ought to eat as much as is necessary to supply the waste suffered by the body, and that slowly, as the sudden expansion of the stomach is injurious, by diminishing the elasticity of its fibres. He who eats slowly, will feel himself satisfied when he has received a due quantity; but he who swallows his food too quickly, without proper mastication, will only think he has eaten enough, when the food occasions a sense of weight and pressure. Eat of one kind of meat at one time, but at all events eat of that dish first which is the most palatable. This is an important rule, and he who observes it, is in little danger of overloading his stomach.

Food should be taken moderately, well masticated, and with a serene mind; it should be taken at proper intervals, early in the morning, at noon, and not protract the hour of supper until the time which nature points out for rest. The most simple food is the most salubrious, and every person ought to attend to the effect which the various aliments produce, and judge for himself. Animal food when too freely used, tends to a putrescent state of the fluids, and vegetable food is acescent, and corrects the putrescent tendency of animal; hence about three fourths of vegetable food and one fourth of animal, are the proper proportions; and by this due mixture we may avoid the diseases arising from a too free use of either.

We ought to take drink only when nature requires, and then in small quantities. The general rule may be to take about double the quantity of liquids to the dry food; however this will not apply in all cases, the season, weather, cold, heat, nature of the food, and more or less exercise, require more or less drink at one time than at another. The stomach ought never to be distended with liquids, as is often the case, occasioning a sense of weight, fluctuation, &c.

Thus by inuring ourselves to the unavoidable difficulties of life; moderate exercise, both of body and mind; observing a steady and equal progress, especially as it respects the mind, together with a strict adherence to temperance, we may support the powers of life until an advanced age. But he, who is like the troubled ocean, regarding neither a regular mode of life, nor the rules of temperance, will reap the fruit of his own doings, be tormented by painful disease, and perhaps his lamp will be blown out at noon.

G—

Charlatanical Imposture.

That "the practice of physic has been taken up by the lazy and ignorant," and that "charlatanical imposture has kept pace with the credulity" of the age, needs no proof. "A reformation of the abuses in the practice of physic" is very desirable, and "ought to be attempted and prosecuted with zeal." The practice of physic requires a strong mind, sound judgment, and natural acuteness. A judicious physician considers him-

self merely an assistant to nature; when her force is sufficient, he leaves her to perform the cure. But some never leave kind nature to herself, but fall to work with the lancet and emetics, cathartics and blisters, tonics and sedatives, pills and powders, and hence never know the utility of any thing. They seem to forget, that the great art of administering medicines, is in well timing them, and regulating the dose or quantity, so as to have the desired effect. Danger is to be apprehended from the unprincipled, who are superficial in knowledge and judgment, and have impudence enough to place themselves above embarrassment.

G—

FROM THE MEDICAL REFORMER.

The candid confession of Dr. Richard Reece, of London, member of the Royal College of Surgeons, author of the "Dictionary of Popular Medicine," "Medical Guide," "Chemical Guide," Corresponding Member of the Society of Practical Medicine, of Paris, &c. &c. &c.

"The charter of the 'Royal College of Physicians' is found to contain a singular licence, which is, permission to any one and every one to practice the healing art by the use of herbs only. Now we really do consider this as ample permission as any man would require, for poor must be the resources of that physician's mind, and very narrow his knowledge of medical botany, who could not from the vegetable kingdom alone cure most of the diseases of the human frame: even the specific of mercury, if we were driven to the necessity of a substitute, might probably be rivalled in some of these productions of nature. We know not whether we have most reason to hail the discovery of mercury as a blessing, or regard it as a curse, since the diseases it entails are as numerous as those which it cures. Our best informed dentists declare that they can clearly witness the progress of the use of mercury, in the increasing diseases and decay of the teeth. There are serious objections also to other articles of the metallic world: antimony, iron, arsenic, are dangerous remedies in the hands of the ignorant, and mankind, perhaps, in the aggregate, would be benefitted by their expulsion from medical practice."

We heartily rejoice that physicians in England begin to open their eyes to the errors and dangers of their profession. They 'see men as trees, walking.' Some of them at least, have discovered by woful experience that the present system of practice is

daily sweeping thousands from the earth. The pillars of the faculty begin to tremble, and ere long the building will fall to the ground. This confession of Dr. Reese, the great advocate for regular practice, is like 'apples of gold in pictures of silver.' We hope our readers will pay the greatest attention to his remarks. How shocking to common sense, that after all the boasted discoveries of four thousand years, this noted physician should declare that 'we know not whether we have most reason to hail the discovery of mercury as a blessing, or regard it as a curse, since the diseases it entails are as numerous as those which it cures. Why then we would ask this learned physician, is it not abandoned? Would to heaven that the loss of the teeth were the only objection to its use! This is one of the smallest evils it produces; it induces a variety of the most serious diseases, and very commonly death itself. Again, this candid practitioner judiciously remarks, 'there are serious objections also to other articles of the metallic world: antimony, iron, and arsenic, are dangerous remedies in the hands of the ignorant; and mankind, perhaps, in the aggregate, would be benefitted by their expulsion from medical practice.' Is not this paradoxical, that physicians persist in giving medicine that they themselves acknowledge to be pernicious? How inconsistent! How unphilosophical! This is altogether inexplicable. Who dare trust their lives in the hands of those who assert, that they give 'dangerous remedies;' especially when it is stated by the same writer, that poor must be the resources of that physician's mind, and very narrow his knowledge of medical botany, who could not, from the vegetable kingdom alone cure most of the diseases of the human frame. When will mankind begin to examine into the present mode of treating the 'sick'? Some of the most respectable merchants in Boston, are so disgusted with the mischief and deplorable consequences resulting from the practice of medicine, that they have formed themselves into an association, and agreed to discountenance minerals of all descriptions, and to use only the productions of our own country. A gentleman, not long since, observed that he was confident that from the number of deaths he had known occasioned by surgical operations, & the administration of deleterious medicine, more persons had been killed by physicians and surgeons, than now lived upon the habitable globe. It is sincerely hoped, that the Lord, in mercy to mankind, will hasten the time when the present practice of physic and surgery will be overthrown, and another raised upon the ruins thereof. Indeed a radical reformation is desirable, if no other benefit should accrue from it than to prevent the destruction, misery, and deaths it occasions. Min-

erals are valuable. Iron is well calculated for stoves and plough-shares. Quicksilver is admirably calculated for coating looking-glasses, &c. &c. Antimony, oil of vitrol, and arsenic, are articles of the utmost importance and utility to the manufacturer, but were never designed to be given for medicine.

FROM THE MEDICAL REFORMER.

BLEEDING.

Dr. REID, in the Medical and Physical Journal, reports as follows:—

The reporter of Finsbury Dispensary has, this last month, been impressed more deeply than ever, with the fatal folly of bleeding. A person, who, at a very advanced period of life, was sinking under the combined operation of age and intemperance was advised, on account of a difficulty of breathing, arising from general debility and a mutilation of the pulmonary organs, to experience frequent and extravagant evacuations from the arm; which of course, in a very short time, put a period to his terrestrial existence.

If the employment of the lancet were abolished altogether, it would, perhaps save, annually a greater number of lives than, in one year, the sword has ever destroyed. Medical men are sometimes apt to consider themselves, and are generally regarded by others, as insignificant and inefficient unless they are doing something; and that is, either performing some painful operation, or administering some powerful remedy. Whereas the fact is, that in no inconsiderable proportion of cases the best thing that can be done is to let the patient alone.

An inflammatory fever, or a habit indicating excess of general excitement, in this enervated age very rarely occurs; and local inflammation, such as acute rheumatism, gout, or quinsy, will seldom, with impunity, admit the opening of a vein. In the last disease, the writer has had more especial reason to entertain this opinion; in which he is confirmed by the authority of a man, celebrated as a philosopher although not a member of the medical profession. "Ah, these accursed physicians! they will certainly kill her with their blood-lettings. I have been myself extremely subject to the quinsy, and have invariably found that bleeding increased its violence; when, on the other hand, I contented myself with using a gargle, and putting my feet in warm water, generally found myself well the following day."

How absurd, to take away any part of that fluid which conduces most essentially and immediately to the vigour and support of the constitution.

Dr. Whyth relates a case which proved fatal in consequence of bleeding. A delicate or nervous girl, having chilled herself at the return of a critical period, was next morning at four o'clock, seized with stupor, and difficulty of speaking and moving. She was soon after bled and blistered. At eight o'clock she could neither speak nor swallow, had a hiccough, and was pale and cold, though her pulse and breathing were natural. Besides taking medicines, she was now bled again, and a third time in the afternoon, and died at ten o'clock; eighteen hours after her seizure. No one can doubt for a moment but that this lady was killed by her physician.

The reporter was called up last evening suddenly, to a patient labouring under inflammation of the stomach. An evacuation of blood, which exaggerates that complaint by inducing debility, was abandoned. I administered a purgative, in the form of an enema, which afforded relief not long after it was given. Two persons were this day slain in this neighborhood by the lancet, and it was expected that another would share the same fate. Well, indeed, might this philosopher exclaim, Ah, these accursed physicians!

If one single man can do so much mischief with this instrument, the lancet, what mischief is done throughout the world by thousands of others!

HEROCLIDES.

Dr. RUSH had attended a gentleman for some time, when the patient finding himself grow worse under the infallible remedies, proposed the calling in of another physician. "with all my heart, my dear friend," said Rush; upon which the gentleman named Dr. KHUN. "No," replied the modest son of Mercury, "I will never consult with Khun!"—"If you will not attend with Dr. Khun," said the gentleman, "he must attend without you; that is all. A few days afterward, Rush, seeing Khun going to his old patient, called out to him: "He is out of danger already; I defy you to kill him!"—"Why," replied Khun, "after his passing through your hands, he may, indeed safely set death at defiance."

Mr. BARRY, a respectable citizen, sometime in the course of the last summer, applied to an apothecary for a dose of cream of tartar, in place of which he received tartar emetic. He had no sooner taken a small portion of it, than he was thrown into the most violent puking and spasms. A physician was immediately sent for, who administered fifteen grains of white vitrol. Death soon followed. QUERY—which killed the man, the tartar emetic, or the white vitriol?

FROM THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL.

The following lines were handed to us by Daniel Tourtellot, Esq. of Gloucester, as the composition of his daughter, a girl of ten years only, with a request that we would publish them. They are certainly a creditable production, and an evidence of precocious genius. The subject is a novel one for a youthful muse; but the choice of it is accounted for by the strong antipathy of the father to the sublimated medicament which is "the burden of the song."

CALOMEL.

Physicians of the highest rank,
(To pay their fees we need a bank,)
Combine all wisdom, art and skill,
Science and sense, in Calomel.

How'er their patients may complain,
Of head, or heart, or nerve, or vein,
Or fever high, or parch, or swell,
The remedy is Calomel.

When Mr. A. or B. is sick—
"Go fetch the doctor, and be quick"—
The doctor comes, with much good will,
But ne'er forgets his Calomel.

He takes his patient by the hand,
And compliments him as a friend;
He sits awhile his pulse to feel,
And then takes out his Calomel.

He then turns to the patient's wife,
"Have you clean paper, spoon, and knife?
"I think your husband might do well
"To take a dose of Calomel."

He then deals out the precious grains—
"This, Ma'am, I'm sure will ease his pains;
"Once in three hours, at sound of bell,
"Give him a dose of Calomel."

He leaves his patient in her care,
And bids good-bye with graceful air;—
In hopes bad humors to expel,
She freely gives the Calomel.

The man grows worse, quite fast indeed—
"Go call for counsel—ride with speed"—
The counsel comes, like post with mail,
Doubling the dose of Calomel.

The man in death begins to groan—
The fatal job for him is done;
His soul is wing'd for heaven or hell—
A sacrifice to Calomel.

Physicians of my former choice,
Receive my counsel and advice;
Be not offended though I tell
The dire effects of Calomel.

And when I must resign my breath,
Pray let me die a natural death,
And bid you all a long farewell,
Without one dose of Calomel.

"Dr. Rush, in that emphatic style which is peculiar to himself, calls mercury the *Sampson* of medicine. In his hands, and in those of his partisans, it may indeed be compared to Sampson; for I verily believe, they have slain more Americans with it, than ever Sampson slew of the Philistines. The Israelite slew his thousands, but the Rushites have slain their tens of thousands."

A Warning to Phlebotomists.

A person, somewhat indisposed, applied to Dr. Beach, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, for relief. The doctor immediately advised him to be bled. He accordingly, submitted to the operation, which was attended with the most serious consequences. It paralyzed his whole arm, and entirely deprived him of the use of it.

An action of damage was instituted by the patient against the physician, which excited much interest. It was defended by the most eminent counsellors in the state, among whom was M. Sherman, Esq. for the plaintiff. After three days trial, the jury returned a verdict, by which 500 dollars was awarded to the unfortunate sufferer.

Boerhaave.

This celebrated physician and scholar ordered in his will that all his books and manuscripts should be burnt, one large volume with silver clasps excepted. The physical people flocked to Leyden, entreating his executors to destroy his will. The effects were sold. A German count, convinced that the great gift book contained the whole arcanum of physic, bought it for ten thousand guilders. It was all blank but the first page, on which was written, "Keep the HEAD cool, the FEET warm, and the BODY open, and then bid defiance to the physician."

Dr. Vaughan's case of death occasioned by Bleeding.

Mr. Charles Green, saddler, in North Fleet-street, a man about thirty-five years old, athletic and convivial, was bled on Sunday in the arm. The wound in the vein was very large, and the discharge of blood from it was profuse, quick, and difficult to be stopped. When stopped, however, the arm was kept quiet, and no pain was felt in it all the next day, nor indeed till Tuesday evening. At this time a pain was felt at the wound, particularly below, extending from it as high as the middle of the arm. The pain increasing, Mr. Green soon began to experience some pain in the head, and some confusion of thought, which, together with extreme anxiety, restlessness, shortness of breath, and frequent rigours, made him declare to his wife his apprehension that his having been bled would presently

cost him his life. A surgeon was sent for on Wednesday. On Friday, by 12 o'clock, when I saw Mr. Green again, the tumor of his arm had totally subsided, and there were evident marks of inflammation from the bend of the arm to the axilla. But alas! though Mr. Jones had, in my absence, applied sinapisms to the feet with a view to relieve the head, yet the disease which had a regular time of appearing and ending, went on with such celerity and increase, that Mr. Green died this very day (Friday) in less than three hours after I left him.

London Med. and Physical Journal.

When I have an injury done me, I never set the beacon on fire, nor am I troubled. I consider who did it; if my kinsman, he did it ignorantly; if my friend, he did it against his will; if my enemy, it is no more than I expected. I ever put a fair construction upon any thing that happens to me.

Archelaus, when one sprinkled water upon him, and his friends aggravated the crime; *You are mistaken*, said he, *he did not sprinkle it upon me, but some other person he took me to be.*

I have often found by experience, that I have fallen into no great inconveniences when I have taken wrongs patiently.

And we show ourselves greater than our adversaries, when we let the world see that they cannot trouble us. When children and fools do the same things that we fret at in others of more advanced years, we pass them without a frown, which shews that it is not the acts done us by our enemies, but our own resentment that injures us.

I bear the injuries of others with the same patience that a physician does those of a parentic patient. I can patiently sustain all outrageous insults against me. My desire is to arrive at heaven, and I ever bless the hand which shortens my journey.

If an injury be done me, and if I do my part, there is no hurt done. It is the nature of an enemy to do mischief; and it is my duty to requite evil with good: I make use of it for the exercise and trial of my virtue. I confront it with the innocence of my life, and the security of my good conscience; I am not much moved but keep myself still, cheerful, and fixed in my station.

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